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PICUS WHO IS ALSO ZEUS

BY

A. H. KRAPPE

On the occasion of the Third International Congress for the History of Religions, Jane Harrison, quoting the famous text from Aristophanes ¹⁾, according to which the Woodpecker is said to have reigned before Zeus, presented archæological evidence from Crete tending to show the existence of an ancient cult of the woodpecker god ²⁾. The late Otto Gruppe was inclined to share this view. According to him, the tradition reporting the identity of the god buried in Crete with Zeus Πήκος (= Picus), handed down by John of Antioch ³⁾ and other Byzantine chroniclers ⁴⁾, would deserve special attention, since it is difficult to see on what other grounds the Cretan Zeus and the Italian Picus should have been equated. Gruppe also called attention to the strange story, preserved in Antonius Liberalis (c. 19) according to which a certain Keleos, who had entered the cave of Zeus to steal honey, was transformed into a woodpecker (*Picus viridis*) ⁵⁾. He explains the presence of the woodpecker in these pre-Hellenic legends by the connexion of the bird with the pre-Hellenic rain-god, a connexion due to the widely held view that the cries of the woodpecker announce coming rain. The only difficulty of this hypothesis, according to Gruppe, is the I. E. provenance of the word *picus* ⁶⁾.

On the strength of the data presented by Jane Harrison, Mr. Cyril

1) *Aves*, 480.

2) Jane E. Harrison, *Bird and Pillar Worship in Connexion with Ouranian Divinities*, in *Trans. Third Intern. Congr. Hist. Relig.*, Oxford, 1908, II, 154—164; cf. also *Themis*, Cambridge, 1912, p. 100 ff.

3) *F. H. G.*, IV, 542, 6.

4) A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, II (Cambridge, 1925), p. 693 ff.

5) Roscher's *Ausführliches Lexikon*, II (1), col. 1028.

6) Bursian's *Jahresbericht*, CLXXXVI (1921), p. 142 f. *Picus* and *Picumnus* are derived from the root *peik-* found also in *pingere*, meaning 'to pick^o split'; cf. Michel Bréal, *Hercule et Cacus*, Paris, 1863, p. 34 n.

Bailey ¹⁾, believing that "the conception of an animal deity is foreign to the strictly animistic notions of the old Roman religion, "looked to an alien origin of the Italian Picus and found it in Crete.

Jane Harrison, for some reason, did not enjoy the full approval of official science ²⁾ either in her own country or on this side of the Atlantic; it is therefore not surprising that her findings should have been challenged on the grounds of insufficient evidence. According to one of her critics, "to found such a theory on a line of Aristophanes, though admittedly referring to a piece of popular lore, is to attempt to break a butterfly on the wheel", while the analogous deduction from the proper name *Keleos* is considered by the same critic as quite as absurd as to conclude from the *dramatis personae* of Varro's treatise on farming that the Romans formerly worshipped domestic animals ³⁾.

Whatever may be thought of the appositeness of these *rapprochements*, the critic is on much safer ground when he accounts for the equation Zeus = Picus on the basis of the *genealogia deorum*: Saturnus = Kronos, hence Picus, son of Saturnus, = Zeus, son of Kronos ⁴⁾. Thus it is not the Woodpecker but Picus who is equated with Zeus. The tomb of Zeus being in Crete, the synchronists, largely adherents of the doctrine of Euhemeros, could not help bringing Picus in when Zeus' tomb was mentioned. Thus the equation would have no popular foundation but be the work of the Hellenistic synchronists ⁵⁾.

The problem would therefore seem to deserve a re-examination, particularly with a view to elucidating two questions, viz. (1) What was the rôle of the woodpecker in ancient Greece, and (2) How does this rôle compare with the rôle of the bird in Italy?

1) *P. Ovidi Nasonis Fastorum Liber III*, Oxford, 1921, p. 46.

2) This term, about the meaning of which a query was raised not so long ago (*Folk-Lore*, XLIX (1938), p. 206 f.), is derived from Seneca, *De brev. vit.*, X. 1, where however it is not so much a question of official science as of official philosophy.

3) W. R. Halliday, *Classical Review*, XXXVI (1922), p. 110. Dr. Halliday's views on this point have been adopted by Dr. M. P. Nilsson in his excellent book *The Minoan-Mycenaean Religion and Its Survival in Greek Religion*, Lund, 1927, p. 483 f.

4) Halliday, p. 111.

5) Halliday, p. 112; but comp. Cook, *Zeus*, II, 693 ff.

In the story of Antonius Liberalis referred to by O. Gruppe, Keleos is transformed into a green woodpecker for having entered the cave of Zeus to steal honey. Since Dr. Halliday opines that the interpretation of proper names is an exceedingly flimsy, if popular, foundation for hypotheses, it is well to determine first whether Keleos was a woodpecker from the beginning and did not merely become one by metamorphosis. To be brief, his very activity proves this quite as much as does his name and his subsequent transformation. As is well known, both the woodpecker and the wild bee have their nests in the hollow of trees, and the bird lives on the grubs and insects found in the tree bark. Woodpeckers are known, in winter, to pay unwelcome visits to beehives, to bore holes into their walls and to work havoc among the insects; hence the Lithuanian name of the woodpecker: *meletà*, the cognate of Gr. μέλι, Lat. *mel*, and related to A. S. *mead*, Russ. *měd* (comp. *medv-ěd'*, litt. 'honey-eater' = 'bear', etc. ¹). A distantly related genus, *Merops*, at home in the Mediterranean countries and which is often confused with *Picus viridis* ²), is known to feed on bees; hence its scientific name, *Merops apiaster*, Ital. *lupo di api* ³). Owing to this confusion, a number of mediaeval glossaries render the Latin *merops* by the Germ. *grünspecht*. The confusion was also responsible for the application to *Picus viridis* of the term *Immenwolf*, *Bienenwolf*, an obvious translation from the Italian ⁴). Conversely, bees were naturally believed to stand in fear of the woodpecker; hence Pliny's advice to remove honey from a hive with the beak of a woodpecker, to avoid being stung ⁵). Finally, the tale of Antonius Liberalis does not stand alone in woodpecker lore. According to a Mongolian story reproduced by O. Dähnhardt ⁶), the woodpecker is a thief transformed into a woodpecker and condemned to feed on wood (sic). We thus conclude that the honey theft of Keleos as well as his name and his transformation point to the fact that he was a woodpecker from

1) Brehms *Tierleben: Vögel*, I (Leipzig—Wien, 1891), p. 577.

2) A. H. Evans, *Turner on Birds*, Cambridge, 1903, p. 113; O. Keller, *Die antike Tierwelt*, II (Leipzig, 1913), p. 51.

3) R. Riegler, *Zeitschrift d. Vereins f. Volkskunde*, XXIII (1913), p. 276.

4) As is well known, even Jacob Grimm was misled, believing the German names old and traditional; cf. his *Deutsche Mythologie*, II, 560; III, 194.

5) *Nat. Hist.*, X. 18.

6) *Natursagen*, Leipzig—Berlin, 1907—'13, III, 232.

the beginning. The localization of the story in Zeus' cave proves the association of the bird with the Hellenic rain-god, for a reason sufficiently indicated by the French weather rule:

Lorsque le pivert crie
Il annonce la pluie ¹⁾.

Another Keleos is known as the father of Iasion and Triptolemos ²⁾. He ruled over Eleusis and hospitably entertained Demeter who, in token of her gratitude, gave Triptolemos the first wheat, with directions to sow it, thus laying the foundations of Attic agriculture. With Iasion the great goddess became even more intimate; to quote Homer ³⁾:

ὥς δ' ὅποι' Ἰασίῳνι εὐπλόκαμος Δημήτηρ
ᾧ θυμῷ εἵξασα μίγῃ φιλότῃ καὶ εὐνῇ
νειῶ ἔνι τριπόλῳ.

Nor is this all. The scholiast of the rhetor Aristides relates that Keleos informed Demeter of the name of the abductor of her daughter; by way of reward, the goddess then lay with him ⁴⁾. It is this episode which appears chiefly to have shocked the Christian Fathers, to judge from a passage in Gregorius Nazianzen ⁵⁾; for they not unnaturally concluded that it was one of the *δρώμενα* of the Eleusinian mysteries ⁶⁾. Whether or not it was, it is difficult to separate it from the solemn cult act in which Zeus dragged Demeter into a cavern to cohabit with her, from which union Brimos, the holy child, was born ⁷⁾. We thus find once more the Woodpecker in the rôle of Zeus or, if this seems preferable, Zeus in the rôle of the Woodpecker.

At all events, there is no denying the close connexion of the Wood-

1) E. Rolland, *Faune populaire de la France*, Paris, 1877—1915, II, 61.

2) Rendel Harris, *Picus Who is also Zeus*, Cambridge, 1916, p. 17; cf. Roscher's *Lexikon*, II (1), col. 1026 ff.

3) Od. V. 125 ff. Cf. also Hes. *Theog.*, 969 ff.

4) Schol. Aristid., p. 22: 'Ἐλθοῦσα δὲ εἰς τὴν Ἀττικὴν καὶ παρὰ Κελεοῦ καὶ Τριπτολέμου τὸν ἡρπακῆκότα μαθοῦσα, μισθὸν αὐτοῖς ἀποδίδωσι τῆς μηνύσεως τὸν σίτον πρῶτον ἀθέσμως συγγενομένη Κελεῶ τῷ Τριπτολεμου πατρί. The same tradition has been preserved by an Orphic hymn (41, 5—9); cf. A. Lang, *The Homeric Hymns*, London, 1899, p. 88.

5) *Or.*, XXXIX, 4.

6) This is denied by P. Foucart, *Les Mystères d'Eleusis*, Paris, 1914, p. 470.

7) *Ibid.*, p. 478 f.

pecker with the great goddess of agriculture. Is this a mere chance, or is there some underlying reason for it? The true solution of the problem was indicated by Dr. Halliday himself ¹⁾, when he pointed out that "the woodpecker was probably regarded as the bird which foretold and even summoned the rain, since throughout Europe it enjoys this reputation in popular belief...".

All this would of course not force us to the conclusion that King Keleos was a woodpecker and a god. The comparative method will establish this, however, beyond the shadow of a doubt. In the mythology of the ancient Prussians, Perkuns, the Baltic thunder-god and the god of the holy oak of Romowe, is accompanied by two lesser gods, Pikuls, also Pekols and Pokols, to all appearances believed to be the twin-sons of Perkuns, whose very names are derived from the root *peiĥ-*, as is the Latin *pīcus*. The father of two woodpeckers is a woodpecker; hence the conclusion that Perkuns was himself a woodpecker ²⁾. Nor is this a particularly Indo-European feature. Among the Semites, Hedad, Haddad, or Hadad ('smith') is the Vulg. Arabic name of the woodpecker ³⁾; but it is also the name of the ancient Syrian thunder-god, likewise a father of twinsons, as the monuments of Doliche clearly show ⁴⁾. If Keleos, the Woodpecker, is the father of Iasion and Triptolemos and besides clearly connected with Demeter, the conclusion would seem warranted that he was not merely a kinglet ruling an Attic village, but a divinity with functions closely analogous to those of the Baltic Perkuns, the Semitic Hadad, i.e. that he was an ancient thunder-god. This leads us back to the Cretan Keleos and to the conclusion that, before becoming a honey thief and an enemy of bees, he was likewise a thunder-god and as such a predecessor of the Hellenic Zeus. This would very definitely bring the green woodpecker back to Crete.

The question arises: (1) Why is this bird associated with the

1) *Op. cit.*, p. 111; cf. also Krappe *Indogermanische Forschungen*, L. (1932), p. 65; Riegler, p. 271 ff.

2) *Indogermanische Forschungen*, L, 67.

3) Harris, *Boanerges*, Cambridge, 1913, p. 36, 394 f. There is, strictly speaking, a possibility that the woodpecker and the thunder-god are both called after the blacksmith (as in Spanish the bird is still called *herrero*) and that there is no direct connexion between bird and thunder-god; but it is hardly a probability in view of the important rôle of the woodpecker in folk-lore.

4) Harris, *Picus*, p. 1 ff.

phenomenon of the electric storm? and (2) Why is he the father of twin-gods or twin-heroes? The first part of the question admits of an easy explanation. As was pointed out above, the woodpecker, rightly or wrongly, is supposed to announce coming rain. In the second place, it is a very noisy bird, the hammering and knocking of which, combined, frequently, with a peculiar drumming sound, audible at a distance, reminded men of the noise of thunder. In the third place, people were struck by the red spot on the head, common to all woodpecker species, and by the red rump and the red color of the lower tail feathers of one European species (*Picus maior*); hence such names as Ital. *braga rossa*, *culo rosso*, *cacafuoco*, *picchio focaro*, etc. Now all birds characterized by red colors were thought to be connected with fire, more particularly with the heavenly fire, the lightning, which they were fabled to have brought down to earth ¹⁾. Thus the woodpecker came to be a thunder- and lightning-bird. This essential fact is indeed not new but has been pointed out repeatedly ²⁾.

What should, perhaps, be brought out is the no less interesting fact that analogous traditions are known among non-Indo-European peoples. Thus in a story from the Congo region, the Spider brings down the heavenly fire with the help of the Tortoise, the Woodpecker, the Rat, and the Sand-fly ³⁾. The natives of Loango relate how the Spider span a long thread and how the wind caught the thread and carried the end of it up to the sky. Then the Woodpecker climbed up the thread and with its beak pecked those holes in the celestial vault which we call the stars. After that, men clambered up the thread and brought down the fire from heaven ⁴⁾. The Menri, a Semang tribe of the Malay Peninsula, believe that the Woodpecker procured the first fire from mankind. In gratitude for this benefit, the bird is held sacred and is never killed ⁵⁾. In a

1) Ovid, *Fasti*, ed. Frazer, III (1929), p. 12 f.

2) Adalbert Kuhn, *Mythologische Studien*, I (Gütersloh, 1886) index, s.v. *Specht*; Riegler, p. 269; cf. also Sam Wide, *Baum, Vogel und Axt*, in *Festschrift tillegnad K. F. Johansson*, Göteborg, 1910, p. 62 ff.

3) R. E. Dennett, *Notes on the Folk-lore of the Fjort*, London, 1898, p. 74.

4) *Die Loango Expedition*, III, 2, von E. Pechuël-Loesche (Stuttgart, 1907), p. 337.

5) P. Schebesta, *Religiöse Anschauungen der Semang*, in *Archiv f. Religionswissenschaft*, XXV (1927), p. 16.

variant from the same region, the Woodpecker is himself in the possession of the fire, until it is stolen from him ¹). In a Nootka story, the Woodpecker was instrumental in obtaining the fire, then in the possession of the wolves ²). According to the Indians of the Lower Fraser River, the Woodpecker and the Beaver fetch the fire for the benefit of men ³).

The second part of the question is easier to answer than to explain fully. All over the earth, twin-children are supposed to be the offspring of the sky- and thunder-gods: the Hellenic Διὸς κοῦροι, the African *Bana ba Tilo*, the Semitic *B'ne Baraq*, and the traditions of the Araucanians, all confirm this fundamental fact, which has likewise received ample discussion ⁴). The Woodpecker being the thunder-bird *par excellence*, it was natural to assume that he was the father of twinchildren. The real reason underlying the association of twin-births with the thunderstorm is still imperfectly known. The association of the bird with twin-births is however more than a simple deduction. In England it is still a common saying: "She has had Martin's hammer knocking at her wicket," applied to a mother of twins ⁵). But the Martin's Bird is none other than *Picus Martius* ⁶).

Above we have tacitly included the genus *Merops* in this survey of woodpecker lore, on the ground of its frequent confusion with *Picus viridis*. If this inclusion is justified, there should be attached to *Merops* traditions of much the same type. Such is indeed the case. In the *Iliad* we hear of a Merops, ally of the Trojans, who is described as by far the best seer of his generation. Foreseeing the death of his two sons, Adrestos and Amphios, he refused to let them

1) P. Schebesta, *Religiöse Anschauungen der Semang*, in *Archiv f. Religionswissenschaft*, XXV (1927), p. 102.

2) George Hunt, *Myths of the Nootka*, in *Thirty-first Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, 1916), p. 894—896.

3) F. Boas, *Indianische Sagen von der Nord-Pazifischen Küste Amerikas*, Berlin, 1895, p. 42.

4) Cf. my book *Mythologie Universelle*, Paris, 1930, p. 65 ff. and index s.v. *Jumeaux*.

5) J. O. Halliwell, *A Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*, London, 1924, s.v. *Martin's Hammer*.

6) The reason for this name must be sought in a pun: *Martin* is connected with *marteau* 'hammer', which brings us back to the woodpecker's function as a blacksmith.

join the Trojan army; they left, however, against their father's will and found an early death at the hands of Diomedes¹⁾.

Let us look at these persons more closely. Merops is said to have been an excellent seer; but the woodpecker was an oracular bird, not only in Italy, where the rôle of *Picus Martius* in the Sabine country is of course well known²⁾, but also among the Votjaks and in faroff Mexico³⁾. It stands to reason that this function is connected with, if not derived from, the birds rôle as weather prophet. The *Iliad* does not state that the two young heroes were twin-brothers. If they are identical with the Argive heroes Adrastus and Amphiaras, as was conjectured by H. Usener⁴⁾, and as is indeed likely, they were, in the origin, not brothers by birth but only by marriage. In that case they may have taken the place of older twin-sons of Merops. At all events, their death, at the same time, at the hands of the grim Diomedes, recalls the death of the Boreades, the twin-sons of Boreas, at the hands of Herakles⁵⁾, the death of the twin-heroes Amicus and Amelius at those of the grim Ogier⁶⁾, and the death of King Etzel's young sons, in the M.H.G. epic, slain by Wittich⁷⁾. In all these cases we are dealing with Dioscuric legends. Thus Merops must be added to the Cretan and the Attic Keleos.

The next question requiring a solution is that of the priority of the Cretan or the Attic Keleos. This problem cannot very well be separated from the larger one of the provenance of the Attic Demeter cult culminating, as it were, in the mysteries of Eleusis. Now there is a good deal of evidence pointing to the Cretan provenance of Demeter Eleuthero and her cult. According to Hesiod⁸⁾, the episode of Demeter's union with Iasion took place in Crete. According to Diodor (V. 77), the offspring from that union, Ploutos, was born

1) *Iliad*, II, 828—34; XI, 328—34.

2) Cf. Ovid, *Fasti*, ed. Frazer, III (1929), p. 8 f.

3) Ludwig Hopf, *Thierorakel und Orakelthiere in alter und neuer Zeit*, Stuttgart, 1888, p. 48; Frontin. *Strat.*, IV. 5. 14; Festus, p. 197, s.v. *oscines aves*; O. Keller, *op. cit.*, p. 50; *Thiere des classischen Altertums*, Innsbrück, 1887, p. 280.

4) Cf. E. Bethe, *Thebanische Heldenlieder*, Leipzig, 1891, p. 65.

5) Apoll. Rhod. *Arg.*, I, 1298 ff.

6) *Modern Language Review*, XVIII (1923), p. 152—61.

7) *Zeitschrift f. deutsches Altertum*, LXIX (1932), p. 137—43.

8) *Theog.*, 969 ff.

in the same island. Clement of Alexandria reports that the rites of Demeter and Kore crossed from Asia to Crete and from Crete to the European peninsula ¹). In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, the goddess, passing herself off as a nurse, says to Keleos' daughters: "Deo is my name that my lady mother gave me; but now, look you, from Crete am I come hither over the wide ridges of the sea"²). On the strength of these facts, a migration of Keleos from Crete to Attica, perhaps via Argolis ³), would at least appear rather likely. It is significant, at all events, that Zeus, according to one tradition, cohabits with Io in the form of a woodpecker ⁴).

The evidence so far presented is in the nature of things circumstantial. It shows that (1) the Woodpecker was associated with the ancient Cretan rain-god (who was also a storm- and thunder-god) and (2) Zeus, being the successor of this pre-Hellenic deity, probably also took over the latter's bird-shape. The evidence does not show that there was a regular 'cult' of the Woodpecker in Crete or, for that matter, anywhere in Greece. It is well however to remember that the term 'cult' itself is somewhat elusive. On the one hand, we have full-fledged animal and bird cults in Egypt (e.g. the Ibis) and a well-attested bird cult in Borneo ⁵) involving prayers and offerings to the bird-shaped divinities, combined with a protection of all specimens of the animal or bird by a powerful taboo; on the other, we have merely the taboo, as, for example, the woodpecker taboo of the Semang referred to above, connected with a tradition or holy legend to the effect that the Woodpecker brought the fire to man. Finally, it is conceivable that only the legend is preserved, while the taboo has fallen into abeyance. Between these extremes, there are obviously many transition stages. To conclude from archæolo-

1) William M. Ramsay, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, London, 1895, I, 91 f.

2) Lang, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

3) Wilhelm Hertz (*Der Werwolf*, Stuttgart, 1862, p. 31) points out unfortunately without reference, that Zeus, in the shape of a Woodpecker, aided Hermes in the slaying of Argos. I have been unable to lay hold of Hertz's source. On Demeter in Argolis, cf. L. Malten, in *Archiv f. Religionswiss.*, XII (1909), p. 285.

4) Suidas, s.v. Io. I am indebted for this reference to my friend Prof. Franz Dornseiff.

5) Cf. Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *La Mentalité primitive*, Paris, 1922, p. 134.

gical evidence that the Woodpecker was a holy bird in Minoan Crete may involve a good deal or may involve very little: the rôle of the bird may have been comparable to that of the Ibis in Egypt or merely to that of the Woodpecker among the Semang. It is impossible to press the evidence farther.

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Let us now tackle the second part of the problem, the attempted derivation of the Italian Picus from the Cretan woodpecker god. This problem is complicated by the very ubiquity of woodpecker lore. Offhand it would be just as unsound to derive the Italian Picus from the Cretan Woodpecker as it would be to connect the Old Prussian Perkuns with the Semitic Hadad. It is clear at once that, to make some historical connexion plausible, it will be necessary to show that the two woodpecker gods are functionally identical or at least similar. Let us turn therefore to the Italian woodpecker traditions.

It is to be noted, in the first place, that the woodpecker of the Italian texts is not the green woodpecker (*Picus viridis*), the *κελεός* of the Greeks, but the red woodpecker (*Picus Martius*). According to the tradition of the people of Picenum, they were guided to the site of that city by the bird, hence the name ¹). This function of the woodpecker as *dux viae* is found elsewhere. In the *Kalevala* the woodpecker (again *Picus Martius*) is appealed to by the huntsman under the name of Nyyrikki ²):

Nyyrikki, O Son of Tapio,
Thou the mighty red-capped hero,
Blaze the path across the country,
And erect me wooden guide-posts,
That I trace this evil pathway
And pursue the righteous roadway,
While I seek my destined quarry.

Here the bird is entreated to score the trees on the huntsman's track, so that he may not lose his way. In the Old Russian *Song of*

1) Strabo, V. 4. 2, p. 240; cf. Ovid, *Fasti*, ed. Frazer, III, 9 f.

2) Rune XIV, 37—43.

Igor (79), woodpeckers, by their tapping, are showing the way to the river ¹⁾. But it is significant that the Hellenic traditions are silent about this function of the bird.

Dionysios of Halikarnassos ²⁾ mentions the oracle of Mars at Tiora Matiene, where a woodpecker, perched upon a wooden post, is said to have performed functions analogous to those of the doves of Dodona. The analogy of the two cults was suggested (1) by the fact that in both cases the tree was very probably an oak ³⁾ and (2) by the identity of the functions of woodpecker and wil dove: both are thunder-birds,—the wild dove is not only the sacred bird of the Zeus of Dodona and Thisbe but of the Slavonic Perun as well ⁴⁾. We are thus led to conclude that the woodpecker of Tiora Matiene was a thunder-bird, associated with Mars in the latter's capacity not of a god of war, as was thought by Plutarch ⁵⁾, but of a god of thunder, rain, and fertility in general. While this function of the woodpecker is the same in Italy and Greece, it is well to point out that it is also the same among the ancient Prussians and the Semites, and no valid conclusion can be drawn from it as to a closer connexion between the Hellenic and the Italian woodpecker.

Best known of all Italian woodpecker traditions is the rôle of the bird in the feeding of the Roman twins. Since these are admittedly the sons of Mars, it is clear that the Woodpecker assumes this rôle because he is the bird sacred to Mars ⁶⁾. This is however not the whole story. On the one hand, we have shown that (1) the Woodpecker is generally the father of two sons who are frequently twins (Keleos, Merops, Perkuns, Hadad, and the Martin's hammer of the English proverbial saying) and (2) this feature is to be regarded as one of the characteristics of Woodpecker lore. The conclusion would then not seem far-fetched that the Italian Woodpecker, too, was a father of twins, which leads to the equation *Picus* = *Mars*.

1) Gregor Krek, *Einleitung in die slavische Literaturgeschichte*, Graz, 1887, p. 532.

2) *A.R.*, I. xiv. 5.

3) Paul Wagler, *Die Eiche in alter und neuer Zeit*, II (Berlin, 1891), p. 23 (*Berliner Studien f. classische Philologie u. Archaeologie*, XIII, 2).

4) *Revue Archéologique*, V^e série, t. XXXVI (1932), p. 80 ff.

5) *Q. R.*, 21.

6) W. Mannhardt, *Antike Wald- und Feldkulte*, Berlin, 1905, p. 335, n. 1.

The very ubiquity of this feature, however, precludes any valid conclusions as to some historical connexion between the Italian and the Hellenic traditions.

A fourth series of Italian legends connects the Woodpecker (*Picus Feronius*) with the goddess Feronia. By an impossible etymology, Adalbert Kuhn ¹⁾ tried to link the name of the goddess with the function of the Woodpecker as fire-bringer. The absurdity of this theory was pointed out by W. Mannhardt ²⁾, who also showed that Feronia (var. *Faronia*), connected with Lat. *far*, was an ancient agricultural divinity with much the same functions as Ceres ³⁾. The *Picus Feronius* of the Italians stands then in much the same relationship to Feronia as the Greek Keleos to Demeter, and for the same reason: the bird announces coming rain, a prerequisite of good crops in the sun-parched countries of the Mediterranean even more than in Northern and Central Europe. Since in France the woodpecker is the *avocat de meunier* 'the miller's patron' (since without rain the miller would have nothing to grind), and since even in far-off Estonia the peasants used to offer oxen to the Woodpecker-god (*Pikker*), who was also the rain and thunder divinity, and prayed to him to obtain 'sweet rain' for their crops ⁴⁾, there is no reason to derive *Picus Feronius* from the Attic or Cretan Keleos.

Vergil represents Picus in human form, dressed in the priestly toga and holding in his hand the augur's staff. It is obvious that here again the bird's ability to foretell coming rain is responsible for the augural functions of the god, as it is also for a curious story of the euhemerists, relating that Picus was an ancient augur who had a tamed woodpecker in his house that foretold him the future ⁵⁾.

Lastly, according to a Roman tradition, a woodpecker helped the people to find the spring that was to feed the famous aqueduct of Aqua Virgo. The same function of the bird lives on in a modern superstition: By burying a mirror near the nest of a red woodpecker

1) *Op. cit.*, p. 30 ff.

2) *Op. cit.*, p. 335.

3) *Ibid.*, p. 327 ff.

4) *Indogermanische Forschungen*, L. 65 f.; Harris, *Picus*, p. 28 f.

5) Serv., ad Verg. *Aen.* VII, 9—10.

and letting a dog look into the glass, it is said to be possible to discover hidden springs by means of the mirror ¹⁾. This function of the bird has no parallel in Greece but is commonly met with in France and elsewhere. Thus, according to a French legend, when God dug the beds of the sea and the rivers, the Woodpecker alone refused to help in the work. In punishment he was condemned to spend his days boring trees and obtaining no other water than the rain drops he is able to catch with his beak ²⁾. A variant of this story is current in Norway ³⁾. The bird is therefore credited with perpetual thirst, and his cries are interpreted as cries for water. Whence it was logical enough to conclude that he should have knowledge of subterraneous sources and springs, even though he might not be permitted to avail himself of their water to quench his thirst. This explains the Italian story as well as the passage in the Old Russian *Song of Igor* referred to above.

On comparing the Italian with the Hellenic traditions we note that (1) the Italian woodpecker is a different species; (2) the Woodpecker's functions of a *dux viae* and a 'sourcier', i.e. a finder of sources and springs, are noted in Italy but not in Greece; (3) all other features which the two traditions have in common they also share with the woodpecker lore of other Indo-European and even of non-Indo-European peoples. In other words, there is not a single fact that would point to Hellenic influences upon the Italian woodpecker traditions. We must rather suppose that the divine Woodpecker, impersonating the rain- and thunder-god, was known among Greeks, Semites, and doubtless also among the ancient Italians. Independent development and, to a certain extent, doubtless also a common heritage, rather than cultural migration will account for the parallel features noted in Greece and Italy.

A word should be said, in conclusion, on the Roman couple

1) Hoffmann-Krayer, in *Handwörterbuch d. deutschen Aberglaubens*, VIII, 141.

2) Rolland, *op. cit.*, II, 63; *Dähnhardt*, III, 322.

3) J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, II⁴, 561; O. Dähnhardt, *Naturgeschichtliche Volksmärchen*, I (Leipzig, 1921), p. 45; *Natursagen*, II, 123 f.

Picumnus and Pilumnus ¹⁾, the former of which was connected with Picus and the divine Woodpecker by none other than Adalbert Kuhn as early as the middle of the last century ²⁾. What is the evidence?

Speaking of the demons presiding over human births, Varro expresses himself as follows ³⁾:

Natus si erat vitalis ac sublatuſ ab obſtetricē, ſtatuebatur in terra ut auſpicaretur rectuſ eſſe, diis coniugalibuſ Pilumno et Picumno in ſedibuſ lectuſ ſternebatur.

This testimony is repeated in Servius' well-known commentary on Vergil ⁴⁾:

Varro Pilumnū et Picumnū infantium deoſ eſſe ait eiſque pro puerpera lectū in atrio ſterni, dum exploretur an vitaliſ ſit qui natuſ eſt.

We also learn that Pilumnus was the patron god of the Roman bakers ⁵⁾, who in the olden days were identical with the millers ⁶⁾.

Thus the question arises: How are these functions to be reconciled with one another and with the etymologies of the two names. Let us turn first to the latter.

Pilumnus is obviously derived from *pilum*, which was a sort of pestle used in primitive times to crush the grain. *Picumnus* is as obviously derived from the same root as *picus*.

As for the function of the two divinities as *κουροτρόφοι*, it would seem difficult to separate it from the the analogous rôle of *Picus* in the birth story of *Romulus* and *Remus*; but even this does not lead us much farther.

Let us note first of all that the name *Pilumnus* has analogies in Greece, strangely enough again attached to divinities forming couples. Thus the name of the *Aloades* is derived from *άλωή* 'threshing floor', connected with *τὸ ἄλευρον*, *τὰ ἄλευρα* of the same

1) Cf. A.-J. Reinach, in *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, LV (1907), p. 317—46, esp. 366 ff., where also the older literature is cited.

2) *Op. cit.*, index, s.v. *Picumnus*.

3) *De vita populi Romani*, lib. II.

4) Ad. Verg. *Aen.* X, 76.

5) L. Preller, *Römische Mythologie*, Berlin, 1881—83, I, 376; F. Liebrecht, *Zur Volkskunde*, Heilbronn, 1879, p. 304.

6) Cf. Pliny, *N.H.*, XVIII. 11. 28.

meaning, while the individual names of the pair Ὠτος and Ἐφιάλης are derived from ὠθέω and ἐφ-ιάλλω, verbs used to denote the crushing of the ears of cereals to extract the grain, or of grapes in wine-making. A couple bearing an analogous name is that of the Moliones, whose name is derived from the root *mar*, *mal* 'to crush', to 'grind', which has also given birth to the words μύλη 'mill', μῦλος 'mill-stone', O.H.G. *maljan* 'to crush', O.N. *Miölnir*, the well-known name of Thor's hammer, Russ. *molnija* 'lightning'. From these facts the mythologists of the last century concluded, that both the Aloades and the Moliones were divinities of agriculture, though it must be admitted that their myths have not the remotest relation to farming¹). As a matter of fact, as the Old Norse and the Russian words clearly indicate, these names are derived from the original meanings of the roots, which are 'to cut'²) and 'to crush' respectively. The true meaning of Ἀλωάδαι and Μολιώνες was then 'crushers'; they were thunder divinities³). On the basis of these analogies the conclusion would seem justified that the *pilum* at the basis of the name *Pilumnus* is a thunder weapon, a sort of mace, comparable with Thor's hammer, by which the noise of the thunder was explained in primitive thought. It is not without interest to note that this conclusion was drawn, more than half a century ago, by Adalbert Kuhn⁴). Assuming that Picumnus, like Pícus, is but another form of the Italian woodpecker and thunder-bird, we thus obtain a twin couple of thunder divinities, the exact counterpart of the Hellenic Aloades and Moliones.

1) F. G. Welcker, *Kleine Schriften*, II, p. cii ff.; François Lenormant, *The Beginnings of History*, New York, 1882, p. 366; Preller-Robert, *Gr. M.*, I, (Berlin, 1894), p. 103 ff.

2) The verb ἀλοιάω, ἀλοάω, 'to thresh', Sanskr. *lāva-* 'cuttingh', *lunāti* 'he cuts', O. Swed. *lō* 'threshing, floor', are derived from the root *al-*, whence Gr. ἀλέω 'to grind', ἀλετών 'mill', ἄλευρον 'wheat flour' cf. E. Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, Heidelberg, 1906, p. 48; A. Walde, *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch d. indogermanischen Sprachen*, Berlin-Leipzig, 1930, p. 89; Pott, *Zeitschr. f. vgl. Sprachforsch.*, IX (1860), p. 250 ff., Preller-Robert, I, 103.

3) Cf. *Amicitiae Corolla*, a volume of essays presented to James Rendel Harris, London, 1933, p. 133—46; *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni*, XII (1936), p. 1—24.

4) *Op. cit.*, p. 93.

Was Pilumnus a woodpecker? There are at least certain facts which favor this view. We have seen above that the noise of the woodpecker is frequently compared with the noise produced by the tools of a carpenter, a smith, etc. and, as Kuhn suggested long ago ¹⁾, the bird hacking and knocking the bark of trees may well have been likened to the pestle employed in primitive times for the crushing of the grain, producing a similar noise. What is more significant is the rôle of Pilumnus as the patron god of the Roman bakers. We have above referred to a Norwegian story relating how a baker's wife was transformed into a woodpecker, and we have also noted that in France the woodpecker is to this day the 'avocat de meunier', the miller's patron, because it is obvious that without rain, supposed to be announced or even brought about by the bird, neither the miller nor the baker would have the raw material necessary for their trades. On the other hand, if we assume (as is frequently done) that Pilumnus became the patron of the bakers simply because of the connexion of his name with *pilum*, the tool of the primitive miller and baker, we should be compelled to base the association of Picumnus and Pilumnus merely on the fact that their names produce a well sounding rhyme, a conclusion which seems to us rather hazardous.

Coming now to the last problem: How are we to explain that two woodpeckers, thunder divinities and patrons of the millers' and bakers' guilds, assumed the function of *κουργοί*? The answer must be sought in their function as *dii coniugales*. The thunder divinities are fertility gods the world over: Thor's hammer plays a prominent part in the ancient Scandinavian wedding ceremonies. Fertility is, however, the main desideratum of all primitive marriages: *Crescite et multiplicamini* is, with the peasant populations of Southern and Eastern Europe and in Mexico, not an empty formula but full of meaning. A sterile marriage, with them, is no marriage at all, and some monogamic law-codes expressly provide that the husband of a sterile marriage be allowed to marry a second wife.

It should also be noted that the *pilum*, like Thor's hammer,

1) *Ibid.*, p. 105.

appears to have been a phallic symbol¹). In the Athenian wedding ceremonies, the pestle (θυεῖα < *θυεσ-ιᾱ and θυέσ-της) played an analogous rôle. In English-speaking countries the word 'pecker' is euphemistically used to designate the phallus, and on the European continent the bird has the reputation of being particularly prominent, sexually; even more so than other birds.

The assumption that Picumnus and Pilumnus are faded thunder-gods in woodpecker form would thus explain their functions in historical times in an easy and logical manner. It would also tend to show that the old mythological school of Adalbert Kuhn (of which Max Müller was a disciple) was not always as far from the truth as some of its more modern opponents have claimed. Modern folklore, in more cases than one, has confirmed its speculations, while at the same time putting them on a more solid base.

1) Rossbach, *Untersuchungen über die römische Ehe*, Stuttgart, 1843, p. 227; S. Eitrem, *Opferitus und Voropfer der Griechen und Römer*, Christiania, 1915, p. 305.

PRINCETON, N. J.

XENOPH. OECON. I 10—11

Res, quibus uti possit aliquis, vera esse χρήματα, alias vero non ita, Socrates contendit. In editione Oxoniensi a viro clarissimo E. C. Marchant curata ita procedit oratio: ὥσπερ γε αὐλοὶ τῷ μὲν ἐπισταμένῳ ἀξίως λόγου αὐλεῖν χρήματά ἐστι, τῷ δὲ μὴ ἐπισταμένῳ οὐδὲν μᾶλλον ἢ ἄχρηστοι λίθοι, εἰ μὴ ἀποδίδοιτό γε αὐτούς. Τοῦτ' ἄρα (libri αὐ, solus O οὖν, Weiske αὐτὸ) φαίνεται ἡμῖν, ἀποδιδόμενοις μὲν οἱ αὐλοὶ χρήματα, μὴ ἀποδιδόμενοις δὲ ἀλλὰ κτησαμένοις οὐ, τοῖς μὴ ἐπισταμένοις αὐτοῖς χρῆσθαι. Haec omnia unius Socratis esse verba non credo. Vide sis quam ineleganter nova conclusio τοῦτ' ἄρα se referat ad ultimam prioris sententiae partem solam. Equidem puto Critobuli esse εἰ μὴ ἀποδίδοιτό γε αὐτούς, Socratem autem respondere Τοῦτ' αὐ φαίνεται κτλ., servata codicum lectione. Breviter sic vertamus: (S.)... sicut fistulae nullis sunt pretii ei qui canere nesciat. (C.) Certe, modo ne vendat eas. (S.) Recte. Hanc igitur novam sententiam proferre licet, nempe fistulam, qua uti nesciat quis, si venum eat, χρῆμα fieri.

v. GR.